

1 DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
STATE OF MISSOURI

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7 NORMANDY SCHOOL DISTRICT

8 PUBLIC HEARING

9 NOVEMBER 12, 2015

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11 Lucas Crossing Elementary Complex

7837 Natural Bridge Road

12 St. Louis, Missouri 63121

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16 (Starting time of hearing: 6:30 p.m.)

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S

2 Present for the Department of Elementary and
3 Secondary Education:

4 Margie Vandeven, Commissioner

5 Tim Ricker, Area Supervisor

6 TJ Spalty, Director of MSIP

7 Stacey Preis, Deputy Commissioner

8 Maureen Clancy-May, Area Supervisor

9 Sarah Potter, Communications Director

10 Bill Thornton, General Counsel

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12 Also Present:

13 Dr. Charles Pearson, Superintendent of Normandy
14 School District

15 Vic Lenz, Missouri Board of Education Member

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The Court Reporter:

21

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 DR. PEARSON: Good evening. I will try
3 it one more time, good evening. I'll remind you as
4 we get started that if you have not gotten any
5 refreshments feel free to do that. There is
6 sandwiches, chips and beverages over on the wall to
7 my left.

8 Thank you for coming to the evening. This is
9 a statute requirement that we have a public hearing
10 as an unaccredited district at least twice a year,
11 so we have this one in the fall and there will be
12 another one in the spring.

13 I am Charles Pearson. I serve as
14 superintendent for the Normandy Schools
15 Collaborative and, again, we welcome you to the
16 night. You will see we've been very intentional
17 about the night and putting you in tables from the
18 beginning because we want to be sure we work this as
19 a working night and then we will, of course,
20 conclude with some opportunity for open dialogue --
21 or open comment. But, again, welcome to each one of
22 you.

23 I have the privilege of introducing a number
24 of people who have joined us tonight, all of which
25 are collaborators and I'm going to start by -- I

1 know Dr. Vic Lenz is here, State Board of Education
2 member, would you please stand. And, Dr. Lenz, I
3 didn't see any other board members come in. Are
4 there -- okay, just wanted to be sure.

5 And then we want to also acknowledge the
6 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,
7 beginning with the commissioner, Dr. Margie
8 Vandeven, if you would please stand. Joining me in
9 the first 30 minutes of the presentation will be
10 Dr. Chris Neale, who is deputy commissioner, if you
11 will please wave to us.

12 And then others who have joined us from the
13 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:
14 T.J. Spalty, Mr. Bill Thornton, Sarah Potter. We
15 have two of our area supervisors with us tonight,
16 Dr. Maureen Clancy-May, area supervisor, and Dr. Tim
17 Ritter, also an area supervisor. And then taking
18 copious notes for us tonight is Ms. Suzie Zes.

19 One collaborator for the night is the
20 organization Beyond Housing. We recognize that to
21 continue the idea of partnering it made sense to
22 work with partnership that has been working with the
23 district for a while and it actually became more
24 active after the spring presentation, I believe,
25 when we recognized we need to begin having some more

1 ongoing conversation with the community. They
2 facilitated that model for several meetings in the
3 spring and then they are also collaborating with us
4 tonight. So Mr. Chris Krehmeyer, CEO of Beyond
5 Housing.

6 And I'm not sure -- I'm going to save one
7 introduction for last. Could I just get a hand of
8 all the Beyond Housing teams that's here. Please
9 stand for a minute. Thank you very much.

10 Meeting goals. These are our goals for
11 tonight, to focus on gaining school accreditation
12 and progress of the accountability plan. We need to
13 share with you tonight the accountability plan and
14 then we need to engage you in some dialogue on how
15 you can specifically assist us in implementing our
16 plan. When I begin my presentation you will see
17 that our plan is still a fairly lean model. We have
18 four core elements and strategies and around those
19 is what the dialogue and work is going to be about
20 tonight. So we'll be looking for you to do that.

21 When we conclude the conversation the whole
22 focus is about accreditation, what kinds of ways we
23 can work in order for us to meet the time line and
24 become accredited and I want to say to you what we
25 say in the organization: Accreditation is a

1 short-term goal. In fact, I'm going to pretend I'm
2 in church, turn to your neighbor and say,
3 "Accreditation is a short-term goal."

4 AUDIENCE: Accreditation is a short-term
5 goal.

6 DR. PEARSON: We recognize that unless
7 we meet that short-term goal there won't be any
8 conversation about what the collaborative will be
9 like 5, 10, 15 years from now. So that's the focus
10 of tonight. That is the focus of tonight. That's
11 what the dialogue is about, what we can do, how you
12 can assist us, how we can be innovative about
13 achieving that short-term goal and then from there
14 we'll go forward.

15 At this time I would like to invite the
16 person who will be facilitating this evening for us,
17 I'm going to ask Ms. Vontriece McDowell, director of
18 community engagement for Beyond Housing if she would
19 come forward at this time.

20 MS. McDOWELL: Good evening, everyone.

21 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

22 MS. McDOWELL: Okay. So as Dr. Pearson
23 said, I represent an organization known as Beyond
24 Housing. A lot of you guys are familiar with us.
25 We're a community development organization. We have

1 been working a footprint for about 16 years now and
2 we've been working very closely with the district
3 over the last five years through our initiative
4 known as the 24:1. And that's 24 municipalities
5 with a shared vision of strong communities, engaged
6 families, and successful children. That last piece
7 is most definitely why we are here tonight.

8 So I'm going to go over a few logistics for
9 you guys. On your tables you should have a few
10 things. If you did not get an agenda as you came in
11 please raise your hand and we can bring you one.
12 There should be an agenda for this evening.

13 You should have an FAQ on your table. We
14 reached out to as many people as we could before
15 this meeting to gather some questions that you all
16 had for the district. We know that people have been
17 wanting to meet and express themselves so we wanted
18 to get as much in this evening as we could, so we
19 tried to gather some questions at the beginning and
20 those questions and answers are on your table. Both
21 DESE and Normandy got together to answer those
22 questions.

23 You also should have a facilitator at each
24 table. Facilitators, please raise your hand. So
25 these folks represent staff, partners, parents,

1 elected officials in your community, so a very
2 adverse group of people that will be facilitating a
3 conversation this evening with you all.

4 So as Dr. Pearson stated, we are here to
5 discuss how we can progress and move forward towards
6 accreditation. But, of course, the district has
7 their list of things that they have to work on but
8 tonight we want you all to kind of take that list
9 and figure out what would be your priority area
10 because at the end of the day we definitely still
11 want to hear from you. But then if that's your
12 priority area, then how do you see yourself plugging
13 in to impact that area.

14 So I know we may have a lot of emotions and
15 we may have a lot of things going on in our minds
16 about what's going on with our district or our
17 children or our neighbors, but what can we do to
18 move forward because we got to make progress and
19 that short-term goal is accreditation.

20 So really quickly let me go through the
21 agenda with you. So you will have a presentation
22 from Dr. Pearson first and then you will have a
23 presentation from a DESE representative and then we
24 will transition into the community round table
25 discussion. So that discussion will happen amongst

1 yourselves at your table.

2 Your facilitator should have a green sheet
3 for you and on that sheet has the three questions
4 that we're going to address tonight. We ask that
5 you identify a note-taker from amongst your group to
6 take notes and then we ask that if it's not that
7 note-taker, that you identify someone at your table
8 that can report back on what you would like to
9 share. It will not stop there, but we need to work.
10 That is our working session to talk about what we
11 can do but we then we will move forward into
12 comments and questions, so we will allow you all
13 time to speak.

14 Keep in mind we have limited time, so we
15 won't be able to get to everyone if everyone has a
16 question. If everyone doesn't have a question
17 hopefully we can get to as many of you as possible.
18 If you have a question and we're unable to get to
19 you this evening you should have small white slips
20 on your table, leave your question. DESE and
21 Normandy has agreed to answer those questions or
22 seek out answers and post them on their websites.
23 The websites are listed at the bottom of your
24 agenda. I recommend that you continue to go to
25 those websites even if you don't have a question

1 just to be informed and updated.

2 As you come up to ask your question or to
3 give your comment, again, time. You will be timed.
4 We will have a real nice clock behind us. We are
5 going to allow everyone two minutes for your
6 comment. Just out of respect, there are going to be
7 a lot of people here that may want to share, we ask
8 that you respect those two minutes. Is everyone in
9 agreeance? Well, hopefully you all are in
10 agreeance.

11 So I'm going to bring up Dr. Pearson now so
12 that he can share his presentation with you about
13 the district and the accountability plan.

14 DR. PEARSON: What you have on the
15 screen are the final APR numbers for the 2015 year,
16 last year, as you can see, including '13 points and
17 the percentages, '14 and '15, so you can see that
18 there was progress made in terms of the 2014/15
19 school year.

20 If you take a look, this is more of a
21 breakdown and I should point out that there are
22 packets reflecting this presentation at your table
23 if you want to follow more closely. But a deeper
24 analysis of where those points came from, you'll see
25 that in academic achievement in the areas of English

1 language arts, math and social studies we received
2 many progress points. Because our district is 100
3 percent free and reduced we also received some
4 points under sub-group achievement. College and
5 career readiness, which involves everything from ACT
6 preparation, dual enrollment, dual credit courses,
7 restoration of some courses, we received eight
8 points there.

9 Attendance we received no points. So we
10 recognize, and as you will probably recall at I
11 think the board meeting maybe two -- actually it was
12 at our last community forum Dr. Carter-Oliver shared
13 with you our attendance initiative to address this,
14 so we anticipate points in that space next time.

15 And then the largest amount of points came
16 from the efforts we made to increase our graduation
17 rate. So we received 22.5 points on a four-year
18 average for graduation.

19 So this is an analysis of how we achieved
20 those particular points both in terms of actual
21 points and in terms of percentages. Again, because
22 the preliminary data came out and other things -- we
23 pretty much have known this over several months and
24 so a lot of you have probably seen this over and
25 over again but we wanted to make sure we formally

1 included it as a part of this particular
2 presentation.

3 Mick Willis has already shared with you, at
4 least for those of you that were present at the
5 board meeting, some of the overall ideas behind our
6 status in terms of our financial summary. Our
7 current budget for the '15/'16 year was \$55,799,000
8 and so we're looking at where we are at this time of
9 the year.

10 I won't read each one of the lines, I will
11 just point you to the last bullet. Current
12 receipts, .2 million less than budgeted at this
13 time. And, again, in terms of expenditures I will
14 again just point you to the last bullet. And then
15 finally balances. So that is our current financial
16 status for the Normandy Schools Collaborative.

17 This, I would really point you to look at the
18 packet. This is a set of our goals for the next
19 year. You'll see that we put the word "stretch"
20 in there. Candidly, we have set some fairly
21 aggressive goals for English language arts and math.
22 While you would typically aim for maybe a 10 or 12
23 percent increase, we can't do that and get to where
24 we need to go. So you'll see that we're aiming for
25 increasing our MPI from 242.8 points at the end of

1 this year to 300 at the end of next year.

2 So if you walk your way down you can see that
3 those are some fairly aggressive goals. The reality
4 is this: We could have set safer goals and,
5 therefore, have a greater chance of hitting them
6 goals but safer goals will not get us to where we
7 need to go in the time line. So a collaborative
8 group of individuals worked and decided that this
9 was going to be our goal.

10 The good thing is we talk about the
11 individuals and new models in the district. We
12 believe we have the capacity to achieve the 28.5
13 points we now need in order to reach accredited
14 status by the time line we have in front of us.

15 In order to make this happen we have several
16 partnerships. This is by no means an exhaustive
17 list but I did just want to share with you a little
18 bit about who is partnering with us in the district.

19 You will recall in June that we received from
20 the governor a \$500,000 grant to support literacy.
21 We took that money and invested in the material or
22 the curriculum called "Wonders," which provides
23 material to support the implementation of balanced
24 literacy in the district.

25 Balanced literacy is a curriculum approach to

1 English language arts that focuses both on reading
2 and writing but it can be very challenging if you
3 don't have the necessary previous knowledge or even
4 the extensive teaching experience to be able to
5 manage that system.

6 We identified Wonders as a model, as material
7 that will support teachers in implementing that, so
8 that grant supported us in doing that.

9 We also invested in a social studies tech
10 support and we also invested in Read 180 as an
11 intervention. We have a reading problem in the
12 Normandy Schools Collaborative -- that data will
13 come up in a moment -- where we have identified that
14 we have children who are struggling and reading
15 interventionists come along and help, smaller group
16 instruction in the classroom comes along and helps
17 but Read 180 is now supporting struggling readers in
18 both the middle -- excuse me -- the 7th and 8th
19 grade center as well as in the high school.

20 The list goes on. Beyond Housing currently
21 is financing family engagement liaisons. These are
22 individuals in our district who identify students
23 who may be struggling for any of a number of
24 reasons, whether or not they don't have access to
25 uniform, they may not have food, they may not have

1 housing. These particular students and their
2 families are identified for additional support.

3 I'll say this about them as well as everyone
4 else that we have an MOU with, we recognize that
5 wrap-around services are critical to the district
6 but if a child is being mentored by an organization,
7 if a child's family is being supported, then we are
8 holding that partner organization accountable for
9 making sure those children are meeting our 90-90
10 goals and making sure that those children are
11 performing as well as they can academically.

12 And this is tough because we have a
13 100 percent free and reduced population which
14 carries with it a lot of challenges. It does not
15 mean that our children are not intellectually able.
16 It just means that they have to push through a great
17 deal in order to achieve what we need.

18 Also listed on the screen is the Regional
19 Business Council who supported us, \$20,000 grant to
20 support middle school and high school English
21 language arts teachers in purchasing books that
22 children can in turn carry home and then begin
23 literacy libraries in their own home. So we thank
24 them for that. That same organization supported 29
25 of our students taking dual enrollment classes this

1 summer.

2 Centene Corporation has now given seven of
3 our high school seniors an internship and looking to
4 expand those numbers this coming spring for both
5 juniors and seniors.

6 Project Lead the Way is supported by Monsanto
7 and Express Scripts. The STEM TQ Initiative is
8 really a focus on our teachers being supported on
9 how to integrate STEM into our curriculum.

10 This list is structured and I only put on the
11 list those who would actually assist us in moving
12 towards academic success. So for those children who
13 are struggling psychologically, BJC behavioral
14 services is there. Bridges offers support for
15 children who want to go to college and this is again
16 through UMSL. Their psychology department is
17 working to support us around literacy as well.

18 Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Girls Inc.,
19 Better Family Life, Parents as Teachers, all
20 partners designed to support us in moving the
21 district forward.

22 This particular slide identifies, as I said
23 earlier, the partnership we have to support dual
24 enrollment. So we are currently working with the
25 University of Missouri St. Louis, St. Louis

1 Community Colleges and Lindenwood to support a
2 number of our students who are either in dual
3 credit, dual enrollment classes, or actually taking
4 classes on the community college campus.

5 And then, finally, there was a lot of
6 conversation in, I guess I would say, late
7 summer/early fall about the St. Louis Regional
8 Education Collaborative. These are those school
9 districts who came alongside us and said, "How can
10 we support you in some kind of reciprocity?" So
11 where we were -- where we're sending them tuition,
12 they're working with us to provide services even
13 though they're getting tuition. So that includes a
14 number of things.

15 We have in one of our schools we have 1.5
16 instructional coaches assigned there by the
17 district. Another school has a single instructional
18 coach assigned. There's a conversation going on
19 with the district right now to assign a math
20 instructional coach to one of our buildings.

21 The Parkway School District does
22 collaborative walkthroughs with us where once a
23 quarter they come through Lucas Crossing and work
24 with Lucas Crossing and we work with them to
25 identify what's going on with balanced literacy.

1 Mentoring is going on. One of our principals
2 is being mentored by one of the principals from one
3 of the collaborative districts.

4 Instructional resources. Access to the
5 software programs they have. One district in that
6 collaborative went on and did volunteer tuition
7 capping.

8 And then data analysis from Education Plus
9 where they're working with us on a quarterly basis
10 to identify exactly what our data means. You'll see
11 Evaluate data in a moment. They help us identify
12 and go deeper about how our children are performing,
13 even when we look at our MPI where those children
14 grew and where those children did not grow.

15 Our accountability plan has four elements.
16 The first one is leadership. Leadership in our plan
17 simply means that our principals are being equipped
18 to give solid feedback to teachers about how to
19 improve instruction. The next part of that plan is
20 our collaborative culture. All this is, is data
21 teams. Research tells us that if teachers look at
22 student performance data, identify where students
23 are struggling, where students are not struggling,
24 what's helping them to make it and learn how to do
25 that very effectively, then we can move achievement

1 forward because when you finish looking at data then
2 you start looking at what instructional strategies
3 can meet the needs of children.

4 The third element is curriculum and
5 assessment. This past summer we completed and had
6 the board to approve a curriculum in the core
7 element areas. We now have pacing guides. We now
8 have a framework for the curriculum. We now have a
9 scope and sequence for lack of a -- in terms of to
10 help direct instruction in the district.

11 And then finally there's effective
12 instruction and this is basically research-based
13 strategies. We now know what kinds of strategies
14 work best and so this becomes the fourth strategy or
15 element of our plan.

16 The difference is we're going to look at
17 these in an insolated way but we understand that
18 they must be seen in a coherent way. So when you
19 are teaching principals how to give good feedback to
20 teachers you, in turn, then form effective
21 instruction. When you are assessing data from
22 students and then teachers are developing strategies
23 you are forming effective instruction.

24 When you are then looking at your curriculum
25 to be sure that the materials that are in the

1 curriculum and the strategies that you are working
2 with are aligned, all of that makes for a more
3 coherent model.

4 When you study school work, and particularly
5 turn-around work, you have to deal with what's
6 called a Standards-Based Instructional System and
7 that's what we now have in the collaborative.

8 The curriculum is based on Missouri learning
9 standards. We have assessments in place and one of
10 the assessments is working with teachers on how to
11 develop their own weekly assessments.

12 I won't read them all to you. I don't want
13 to do that. I'll just point out to you at the
14 bottom, if you have professional development, if you
15 have teacher leaders being trained, then that
16 supports this particular system and what we now know
17 is that we have a model that aligns both that model
18 and then it aligns the areas of effective
19 leadership, collaborative culture, curriculum and
20 assessment and effective instruction. So that's our
21 accountability plan.

22 The first strategy of the leadership, where
23 we are currently, the second round of evaluations
24 has now taken place, all of our principals are
25 expected to give all teachers at least two

1 interactions of feedback each week. That feedback
2 involves 30-second feedback, which is basically
3 affirming what we see in the classroom and 5-minute
4 feedback, which affirms but then also talks about
5 why it was effective.

6 For example, a teacher walks -- a principal
7 walks into a room and sees the teacher working, sees
8 the teacher suddenly have children hold up a
9 whiteboard to indicate how many of them have a
10 correct answer. That principal then can look at her
11 and say, "I noticed that. I noticed that there was
12 a certain point when you pulled all the children in
13 to find out what they knew." That's called an overt
14 response.

15 Then that person -- that principal would say,
16 "That's a great strategy because it helps children
17 understand what they know but it also helps you to
18 understand who does or does not know. Please keep
19 that up." That's the structure of strong feedback.

20 And then along with feedback is when you
21 start moving into adding practice to the teacher or
22 in some cases say, "You need to stop what you were
23 doing. That's not as effective."

24 Leadership continues. Our teachers -- well,
25 our principals are being trained through our

1 principals' meetings and pull-out sessions around
2 the new Missouri Education Evaluation System. We're
3 using that time to explore depth of knowledge. In
4 other words, is what the child doing lower-level
5 learning where you just memorize or is it
6 higher-level learning where you're talking about the
7 child applying the knowledge.

8 Student engagement. You know, is the child
9 very engaged, meaning doing busy work when you can't
10 really tell, you may see the hands moving but the
11 brain is not engaged and then, again, training about
12 how to provide frequency of feedback. We do this
13 through building walkthroughs, our instructional
14 coaches are in place, and I already mentioned before
15 the planning and working with teachers around
16 feedback.

17 Data teams is a collaborative culture. Each
18 one of our buildings has a leadership team. They
19 are building data teams or teams of teachers in the
20 grade levels or, in terms of content, working in
21 each one of the buildings looking at student data.

22 I will confess to you that we are not as far
23 as we need to be with this part. It has been a
24 challenge as we have worked our way through trying
25 to figure out the best ways to apply this model.

1 But what we do know is that this model will move us
2 forward because it does work. When teachers look at
3 what students are actually doing and move past their
4 feelings about it, I think, but what data tells me
5 is working, then we can move children forward.

6 So what you see on the screen, basically the
7 structures behind data teams, how we make use of
8 P.D. days, how we meet after school in some cases.

9 Curriculum and implementation -- or rather
10 assessment. I already mentioned to you that we
11 adopted a curriculum. On the screen you'll see
12 listed the frameworks and pacing guides. We're
13 currently identifying now which parts of those
14 curriculum we want to load first but all teachers
15 have access to the curriculum.

16 We have a new model called "Engrade" and it
17 means that our curriculum can now be accessed online
18 and eventually, when it's fully up and running, it
19 also means that parents can access it as well as
20 students.

21 Curriculum and assessment continues. These
22 are key strategies that support the implementation
23 of the curriculum. I mentioned to you already
24 Balanced Literacy and Wonders. I did not mention
25 MyOn Reading, which is a great way to support

1 independent reading by children online. Read 180, I
2 already referenced. It is a support for children
3 who are struggling with reading. But on the math we
4 have the exact same model, Math 180 and Aleks. Both
5 of these are academic models used to support our
6 children.

7 Next on the assessments that we worked with
8 this year, the main assessment is "Evaluate."
9 Evaluate tests our children in English language arts
10 and in math. Grades 2 through 12 are tested
11 monthly. The K and 1 is only tested three times a
12 year.

13 The model works like this: the first month,
14 September, half of the standards in the state were
15 tested and in October the other half were tested and
16 then in November the first half is tested again and
17 we now can begin to take a look and see if our
18 children showed progress from September and November
19 and then October and December. And that model will
20 continue throughout the year.

21 If our children show proficiency from 60 to
22 80 percent in Evaluate we can predict that they in
23 turn will be proficient on the MAP. So this is how
24 that tool is getting used and it is combined with
25 the assessments that our teachers are creating.

1 Under effective instruction we're still
2 working with the same strategies: the Rutherford,
3 Marzano and Hattie. These are research-based.
4 Teachers are receiving feedback. I've already
5 referenced depth of knowledge and student
6 engagement, so we're covered in that. And that
7 brings us to data.

8 Evaluate is our model. Evaluate is given
9 monthly. We do the STAR for reading three times a
10 year, data teams are creating their own assessments
11 and then we're now adding student growth measures to
12 the data teams. Student growth measures means that
13 in a year teachers will have as a quarterly
14 evaluation how their children are actually
15 progressing academically and so we're starting that
16 process now in terms of data.

17 We have a reading challenge. This data just
18 confirms that. So when you take a look at the
19 trends here you can see that from 7th grade to 12th
20 grade we have a significant amount of children who
21 are reading in below basic. Our identification is
22 why are they reading below basic, what are the
23 interventions that they need individually and that's
24 what we have to do as work this year but the data is
25 that our children in the district struggle with

1 reading. This is one assessment.

2 When we take a look at achievement -- excuse
3 me, of ELA, you'll see again when we look at the
4 numbers, September, again -- remember, these are not
5 comparable at this time -- September tested one half
6 of the standards of reading and then October testing
7 the other, but you can still see that we have a
8 significant number of children -- this just
9 correlates with the other STAR reading. We have to
10 do some work around reading in the district.

11 And what do we know? We know that we have to
12 use our reading -- we have to equip our teachers to
13 do the balanced literacy. We have reading
14 interventionists in each one of the buildings. We
15 have Read 180 that is supporting children both at
16 the 7th and 8th grade center and at the high school.
17 We have to address this reading challenge.

18 The upside though is that the data let's us
19 know exactly what strings they're missing, we can
20 identify how many children are struggling with what,
21 we can pull those students out in terms of analyzing
22 the data, we can identify which teachers have those
23 students and work around getting something which
24 literally amounts to getting an individual
25 educational plan for each one of those children

1 moving forward.

2 But, candidly, we have a reading problem in
3 the collaborative and that is not unusual for a
4 high-poverty population. I will say it multiple
5 times: It is not about that intellect. They can
6 get it. It is about how effective we can frame the
7 environment so that they have an opportunity to get
8 it and show what they know.

9 This trend continues in the math. Again,
10 same structure. September was one half of the math
11 standards. October was the second half. I should
12 mention you'll notice that the numbers were larger
13 in September than October. The larger numbers
14 reflect the fact that the kindergarten and first
15 grade tested then, but the kindergarten and first
16 grade won't test again until December. So that's
17 the reason for the difference in numbers.

18 When I began the year I reframed what we were
19 doing around the areas of achievement, citizenship,
20 college and career readiness. Under citizenship we
21 look at attendance and we look at discipline. So if
22 you take a look you'll notice what our attendance
23 numbers are. You'll see compared this time to last
24 year.

25 I point you to the bottom because we've had a

1 lot of information and conversation in this district
2 about discipline. Our out-of-school suspension
3 numbers are down because we're making better use of
4 parental engagement, better use of the in-school
5 suspension or some kind of in-school remedy for
6 those children who are struggling but we acknowledge
7 that we still have children who need to have some
8 skills taught to them about how to address their
9 emotional challenges.

10 One of the things we're doing is looking at
11 early childhood through first grade. There are many
12 children who come to us who have serious emotional
13 issues. They don't know how to address their pain,
14 their problems. We have T.A.'s in place but there
15 are children who actually need some kind of a
16 social/emotional curriculum.

17 We are identifying that now because if we can
18 address that in the early grades, in the same way we
19 attempt to address reading challenges in the early
20 grades, by the time they get to 4th grade then we'll
21 have more tools in place, they'll have more skills
22 in place to address their own challenges.

23 Discipline-wise, when I compare '14/'15 to
24 this year, you can see the difference. Of course
25 the number of children in the district is slightly

1 smaller but the percentage of children experiencing
2 OSS in our district is smaller as well.
3 '15/'16 sees 5 percent of our students as of the end
4 of October experiencing out-of-school suspension.

5 The transfer program, already alluded to an
6 earlier conversation. We had 564 students who were
7 placed, who were placed and could transfer. We
8 currently have 521 that have actually transferred.
9 Now, there could be a number of reasons for that but
10 what I would like to hope is that there's some
11 parents who had the option, decided let's see if
12 this place is going to be any different at all this
13 year and so they're giving us a chance to show
14 what's possible. So we appreciate that.

15 Mr. Willis mentioned earlier that the 564
16 students, we budgeted \$7.1 million to support that.
17 Forty-three less students means we can save the
18 district over \$700,000.

19 College and career readiness, another factor
20 for our graduation -- excuse me -- for our
21 accreditation. This list is just a list of all the
22 students involved in dual enrollment, dual credit,
23 advanced placement, honors courses at the high
24 school. We our excited about this. We are excited
25 about the return of AP but what we're working on now

1 is getting the rigor in those courses up.

2 We are excited about our children who are now
3 actually taking classes on a college campus. We
4 know that's going to be a key to any rigor because
5 they're doing something away from us and then still
6 coming back to us and provided with an opportunity
7 to benefit from what they're learning.

8 One of the last things I'll talk about is
9 professional development and these are all the
10 things that we're doing in the district to support
11 our teachers getting better. Again, I won't read
12 the list to you. I will highlight new teacher
13 orientation, we added that this year. We now have
14 mentors and mentors and the new teachers meet
15 monthly. Instructional coaches in the budget.
16 We're focusing on classroom management and we will
17 be focusing on P.D. and culture responsiveness for
18 the third time, in a larger group, in January.

19 And then, finally, challenges and
20 opportunities. Currently we are working with a team
21 of people to help us organize our wraparounds. Our
22 children have needs but we recognize that we can't
23 have 50 or 60 different agencies operating in the
24 district and they're not talking to each other. We
25 can't do it. It doesn't make sense. Everybody is

1 wanting to do good work so we're working on a model
2 that's going to allow all of those wraparounds to be
3 more focused on helping a select group of children.

4 It has happened organically already in the
5 7th and 8th center. Already occurred there where
6 they're sitting and they're talking and they're
7 actively supporting the change in the culture. It's
8 starting to happen at Lucas Crossing as many of you
9 sat down just last week to identify with
10 psychologists there what children need, what
11 children don't need, what services do we need. So
12 that process has already begun.

13 The ongoing transfer program is still a
14 challenge. As long as those funds are leaving our
15 district it means that there are things we'd like to
16 do for teachers we can't do. It means that there
17 are resources we would like to have that we can't
18 have. It means that there are programs that we're
19 going to have to bring back in slowly such as
20 gifted. G.A.T.E. is back at the middle -- at the
21 7th and 8th center. AP and honors are back at the
22 high school. We now need to do something about
23 those bright children at the elementary level who
24 are not getting treated fairly around giftedness, so
25 we need to bring that back in.

1 Staffing support. Our salaries are not
2 competitive. Our salaries are not competitive. We
3 need to figure out other ways to be sure we can
4 support people who are working in a challenging
5 context. We need to figure out other ways to bring
6 motivation and incentive to them.

7 And then, finally, I will share with you what
8 I'm calling the "career pipeline." I'm going to
9 come back to that. Actually, let me do this first.
10 This is what I'm going to be asking you to talk
11 about in a few minutes in a small group. We're
12 asking you to talk about how you can assist us in
13 doing this work.

14 And I will just point you to the last bullet
15 up there. I'm a broken record about this: learning
16 at home. For everyone that's here, if you can do
17 this in your own home and support someone else, be
18 sure that children are reading every single day.
19 Every single day. On weekends, Thanksgiving,
20 Christmas Eve. Our children need to be reading
21 every single day.

22 One of the challenges for many of our
23 children is they don't get to read as much in the
24 summer, so they come back six weeks behind. We have
25 -- you can -- the truth is only you can do that

1 because we are not in the home with you. Create
2 spaces in your home where they can do homework.
3 Don't do the homework for them, but create spaces
4 where they can do it. Set up parameters like that.
5 Access the library.

6 If we can address the reading on both ends
7 and we're working as a district because one of the
8 things I'm asking you to do now and you can't do as
9 well without us, we're going to need to work on
10 doing a better job of giving you, as parents,
11 strategies to use with your children when they read.
12 What kind of questions do you ask the child before
13 they read? What kind do you ask them after they
14 read? But this is a list of opportunities that we
15 want you to do for us.

16 We just got this news a few days ago, as I
17 close my conversation. There's a funder who is
18 going to give us 250 -- excuse me -- \$250 in a
19 college savings account for every Normandy High
20 School student this year. Those funds can be used
21 when that child graduates from a four-year college,
22 community college or vocational.

23 They are going to be giving us funds for ACT
24 prep both this year and next year. And then,
25 finally, they're going to be supporting multiple

1 takings of the ACT test. That's an exciting
2 partnership for our families and I thought this was
3 a great place for me to end around wraparounds.
4 That's what those agencies can do, but what you'll
5 be talking about in just a moment is what you can
6 do.

7 This is the last slide and this is not about
8 accreditation. This is about after we get that
9 done. In my mind there's no reason that our
10 children in the early childhood can't have a path
11 from early childhood, through our system, right into
12 a university such as UMSL. We're having that
13 conversation or there are two other universities who
14 want to partner with us. There's no reason why that
15 can't happen. There's no reason why they can't come
16 out of that place and go into somewhere.

17 Can you imagine early childhood, through our
18 system, to UMSL to Express Scripts? I call it the
19 "career pipeline." That can happen. We just have
20 to have a dialogue. So when we move past just
21 thinking about accreditation and start thinking
22 about where we can go beyond accreditation this is
23 the model we're going to be bringing to you as a
24 community.

25 And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the last

1 of my voice you're going to hear for a long time.

2 I'm going to invite now, Dr. Chris Neale.

3 DR. NEALE: Good evening, ladies and
4 gentlemen. Dr. Pearson, it is both a privilege to
5 follow you and a little scary. That was a pretty
6 exciting presentation. I'm the assistant
7 commissioner for the Office of Quality Schools,
8 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and
9 up until the last couple of days I was known as the
10 new guy around there.

11 I've been on the job a little less than six
12 months after a career of 32 years of education in
13 the public schools. I was a band director for a
14 while and then I ran buildings for a while and then
15 I ran districts for a while.

16 More importantly than my career in education
17 or my current job is the fact that every day when I
18 get up in the morning I'm a dad of two kids who
19 married well and gave us -- each of them gave us
20 granddaughters and so the seriousness of the quality
21 of education is very personal for me just as it is
22 for you.

23 I will tell you it's a privilege to be here
24 with you tonight and I thank you for coming out and
25 being involved in the support of improvement of the

1 Normandy School Collaborative Program. It's a
2 privilege to be with my colleague Charles Pearson
3 again as I've gotten to know him over the last few
4 months. I truly admire and respect the work and his
5 leadership here.

6 It's a privilege to be with you because I
7 noticed when I walked into the buildings last month
8 that you've posted five pillars you hold as
9 important aspects of the culture you intend to have
10 here, that you hold the pillars: accountability,
11 collaboration, professionalism, trust and respect as
12 the way you will do business. It tells me a lot
13 about you. It tells me that you will take
14 responsibility -- now that's good. (Cell phone
15 interruption.)

16 You take responsibility for the improvement
17 of education for your sons and daughters and
18 grandchildren. That you intend to do that by
19 working as a team. That's the only way it will get
20 done. That you will do so professionally. That
21 when you focus, you'll focus on what's good for kids
22 and not what's good for grownups. That you intend
23 to approach the work with an attitude of trust
24 toward one another, which tells me you presume the
25 others is, even in the face of any disagreement,

1 starting from a base of positive intentions.

2 And finally respect, which is so important
3 for all of us, not only for how we treat each other
4 but for what we teach our kids because modeling is
5 the most important teacher we have. Thank you for
6 that approach.

7 I thank you for that approach because it's
8 the only way the work will get done. We do not have
9 an unlimited time line, neither for money, nor the
10 school improvement initiative. Accreditation is a
11 short-term goal. The long-term goal is that career
12 pipeline. The only way to get the short-term goal
13 accomplished is with a sense of urgency and the
14 seriousness of the pillars you've selected.

15 I do need tonight, it's a matter of official
16 business, to share with you and I don't think it's
17 just official business based on the questions that
18 we received, what it is that the department is doing
19 to support the efforts of improvement here at
20 Normandy.

21 I will tell you that our area supervisors,
22 Dr. Clancy-May and Dr. Ritter sometimes is her
23 substitute, are here every month to six weeks
24 meeting regional school improvement teams ensuring
25 that the plan you've seen on the board is worked

1 properly, the data is analyzed properly, and that
2 decisions are made for the sake of children.

3 We have three additional specialists who
4 monitor the use and the improvement of progress of
5 federal funds we call "school improvement grants"
6 that come through our department. Those three
7 people are here regularly offering candid feedback
8 and encouragement and support. We have staff that
9 comes out here regularly, that includes finance
10 staff and sometimes just informal visits.

11 Dr. Pearson appears regularly before the
12 State Board of Education to give accountability
13 reports on your behalf. And I will tell you I was
14 there the last time he presented, he was really
15 well-received and many, many compliments sent to him
16 and to your district because of that, so I do find
17 that there are encouraging things even in the midst
18 of the challenges and the urgency.

19 When I came out last month to tour your
20 buildings one of the first people I met at the high
21 school was the assistant principal, I believe his
22 name is Carl Imhof, and the first thing he said to
23 me was, "Good to meet you. Don't believe everything
24 you read." And he's right. And he's right.

25 I wanted to act as, in someway, a voice of

1 encouragement to you because what I found in your
2 buildings was a sense of order, care for children,
3 and an academic focus that is needed. Dr. Pearson
4 was very clear that we need to get the foot on the
5 gas pedal of rigor and not let up but we've started
6 in the right direction and I appreciate that very,
7 very much.

8 I appreciate too seeing in the plan that
9 what's going on here is the improvement of staff,
10 the stabilization of staff, investing in their
11 abilities, making sure that what we teach and how we
12 teach is the right thing. Those things are all
13 necessary.

14 And I appreciate too, the frank talk he
15 shared with you about the importance of reading with
16 children. Even if you don't have all the reading
17 strategies, just read. Just read. Read with them.
18 Let them read to you. Ensure that they read. It's
19 really a lot like running. Even if you don't have a
20 running coach, if you just keep running you'll get
21 faster and you'll have greater endurance. Just
22 read. Just read.

23 I would encourage you to take the same
24 approach with mathematics. It's not very hard to
25 ask mathematical questions like, "How much change do

1 you think we'll get back from a \$10 bill?" As long
2 as they are doing mental math they're improving
3 their skills.

4 Get your kids to school. Get your kids to
5 school. I love the improvement in the numbers but
6 when I looked at the original APR it's obvious we
7 earned no points there. That's an easy ten. That's
8 an easy improvement. Get your kids to school.

9 Encourage them when it's hard. Hard work is
10 what they need. It's not what they like. It's what
11 they need. Encourage them to work hard in school
12 because this district is headed in the right
13 direction.

14 Dr. Pearson, I think it's fair to say that
15 I've shared anything that's of use tonight and I
16 doubt if anybody here came to see what I had to say.
17 I think the important work will take place around
18 the tables, so I turn this back over to you.

19 Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, not just for
20 tonight, but for those meetings that have gone on in
21 support of this district.

22 MS. McDOWELL: All right. Thank you,
23 Mr. Neale and Dr. Pearson, for your presentations.

24 So a few things that I heard -- well, the
25 last thing was that the district is headed in the

1 right direction, so that was good to hear from a
2 DESE representative for myself, I don't know about
3 you. But as Dr. Pearson was talking there was a lot
4 of information, we know that, a lot of data, we know
5 that, but it is all very important to get a real
6 understanding of what is happening in our district.

7 So we see that there are areas of improvement
8 that they are working on and so now is the time for
9 us to talk about what we can do and I know every
10 time -- because I know I've seen a lot of you guys
11 come out to all of those things that Mr. Neale was
12 talking about, I know you all are doing them.

13 You guys are coming to the meetings a lot, so
14 that means you all are dedicated whether you're
15 parents, partners, or just residents of the
16 community, you all care, you're here for a reason.
17 But sometimes people will be like: What can I do?
18 And that's what we're going to do tonight, talk
19 about what it is that we can do but amongst each
20 other.

21 And you may hear from each other some of the
22 things that are already being done by a neighbor.
23 Some things that jumped into my head as Pearson was
24 talking and he was talking about literacy and how we
25 can move those numbers and how we can read to our

1 kids and it's not just happening in the home but if
2 Barbara Cotton, if you could raise your hand, one of
3 my co-workers, she's in the community engagement
4 department, she goes out and she talks to our
5 businesses in our community all the time and she has
6 quite a few that have said, "I'll put books in my
7 barbershop. I'll put books in my salon. I'll put
8 books in my auto shop." Because we go in there with
9 our children and I would encourage them to read
10 while they're waiting for their parents or while
11 they're getting their haircut.

12 So there are ways to get involved and to do
13 it and sometimes because there's so much that needs
14 to be done we get clouded by it and we forget there
15 are some little things that we can step up and do
16 even if we don't have children in the district.

17 So that's my soapbox. And then hearing about
18 the college savings piece, amazing. So we know that
19 one of the largest burdens in the way for our babies
20 to go to school is the money. It costs a lot. I'm
21 still paying my college education. Still paying for
22 it and I'm older. So to know that someone has
23 stepped up is not going to solve the problem but it
24 can alleviate some of that stress if our babies are
25 able to save and focus on what they should be

1 focusing on, which is the academics.

2 Okay. So those are all the good things that
3 I heard. I know there were a lot more but I wrote
4 down what really jumped out to me. So now I'm going
5 to ask the facilitators to get started. If you all
6 can turn to your groups, again, I know some of you
7 are burning to say something. I can see it in your
8 faces and you're going to get that time.

9 We're going to have an opportunity for
10 comments and questions. We're going to try to
11 address those, but before we do that we need to talk
12 about what we're going to do, okay, and there will
13 be a lot of pointing fingers but this is a
14 collaborative effort and change is not going to
15 happen overnight and it's not going to just happen
16 with the parents' doing or with the district's
17 doing, okay.

18 So you all have this green sheet at your
19 table. There should only be one copy because there
20 only needs to be one person writing down your
21 answers.

22 You all have three questions and they're
23 related to everything Pearson just shared with us,
24 specifically those four areas around accreditation
25 that he's focusing on. That's improving academic

1 achievement, college and career readiness,
2 attendance and increasing the graduation rate.

3 So what I want to hear from you, because
4 clearly they can't pick and choose as a district
5 what they want to tackle, they have to tackle them
6 all at once, but what they want to know from you is
7 as parents, partners, community members: How would
8 you prioritize that list?

9 And, as I said earlier, if you picked your
10 number one there was a reason and if that's your
11 number one what are you going to do about it, okay?
12 So that's what we're going to discuss at our table.
13 Then I want you all to pick someone that just has to
14 say something but the only thing they're going to
15 say is what's on this green sheet, okay?

16 And then after each table shares, this young
17 lady is documenting all the responses because we
18 want to know what you have to say, after that is
19 shared we'll get into your own personal comments and
20 questions. I see it in your face, I'm calling on
21 you first. Okay. All right. You guys can go ahead
22 and start talking.

23 (Whereupon, small group discussions took
24 place off the record.)

25 DR. PEARSON: Excuse me, on page 7 of

1 the slides when I compared the enrollment numbers
2 and the OSS numbers, the numbers on the slide that
3 said citizenship were as of October and then the
4 numbers that are here on the next slide are
5 November, so that's why those numbers are different.
6 One was the end of October. The other one included
7 some additional days.

8 (Small group discussions continued.)

9 MS. McDOWELL: Okay. We're going to go
10 ahead and get started, so I hope everyone has chosen
11 someone to speak back to share your responses.

12 If you can hear my voice clap once. If you
13 can hear my voice clap twice. Thank you.

14 Okay. So now we're going to go ahead and
15 move forward with sharing your responses. We have
16 Ms. McCauley, if you can raise your hand, she's
17 going to cover these three tables here. Then we
18 have Ms. Sharifah in the back, she's going to cover
19 the three tables in her area and then Shonte will
20 cover the tables over there. So whoever is your
21 speaker when you're ready we're going to go ahead
22 and get started. We can get started on this end,
23 Ms. McCauley.

24 And if you guys, when you finish reading your
25 responses, if you keep your green papers on your

1 table I'm going to take those, I'm going to type up
2 your responses so that DESE and Normandy will have
3 this information. And if you want to share your
4 name, that would be great.

5 MS. SHIRLEY: I'm Shirley and since I'm
6 the first one up this is Table 1. Okay. So the
7 thing that we found very important was attendance.
8 You know, I think attendance speaks to a lot of
9 things. It speaks to, you know, our points. It
10 speaks to our basic formula. It just speaks to a
11 lot of things. Can you all hear me?

12 AUDIENCE: Yeah.

13 MS. SHIRLEY: Okay. And then learning
14 at home. We need our parents to send our students
15 to school ready to learn and we don't know if maybe
16 the home is the place that's saying learning is not
17 important or whatever, but I know we have parent
18 liaisons and different things, so I think home
19 visits are great for that so that we can see what
20 the issues are at home, help our students there.

21 And, of course, academic achievement, that
22 needs to be important. Where does that start?
23 Well, that starts from the home. It starts from the
24 student willing to learn. Starts with the teachers
25 willing to teach. Respect from the teachers. Just

1 a lot of things involving academic achievement.

2 And then the graduation rate, which we did
3 get points on, so evidently we're doing that right
4 but I think everyone needs to know that it's not
5 only graduating the student, it is tracking them a
6 couple years out that's important as well.

7 And then college and career readiness. So
8 you just want me to address the first question?

9 MS. McDOWELL: Your number one and why
10 it was your number one.

11 MS. SHIRLEY: Oh, okay. We said
12 attendance is number one because if the student is
13 not present -- oh, my time is up. Okay. Well,
14 number one.

15 TABLE 2 SPEAKER: Do I answer number one
16 also?

17 MS. McDOWELL: Yes, ma'am, you're going
18 to -- so the question -- you're going to share
19 number two and what you're sharing is what was your
20 top priority. So your number one priority, which
21 would be your answer from number one and then you're
22 going to tell us why that was your priority.

23 So this group said attendance because they
24 think that's where everything starts and then your
25 number three, you'll share that as well, which is

1 ways that you can get involved and what they would
2 have shared is impacting a child's attendance at
3 school.

4 TABLE 2 SPEAKER: Okay. I guess we're
5 Table No. 2 and we're the Strive for 95 team. And,
6 in case you didn't know, Strive for 95 is the
7 attendance initiative in the district, so everybody
8 remember that. You'll be tested on that shortly.

9 Okay. Our number one was also attendance
10 because, as was said, if they're not there, they
11 can't learn or learn as much as we would want them
12 to learn. So attendance and that's probably
13 everybody's number one I would think at this point.

14 And so we talked about ways to get them here
15 and we also said that since the Strive for 95
16 Initiative is already in place we need to do a better
17 job of marketing that initiative and we talked about
18 Barbara Cotton, to use her name again, she heads up
19 at least with the businesses in the area and if
20 every business has "Strive for 95 attendance" in
21 their businesses, just a poster, a simple thing, and
22 we all buy into the Strive for 95 and just make this
23 a community-wide effort, everywhere that child goes,
24 everywhere that family goes they see "Strive for
25 95," the new cinema, "Strive for 95," everybody is

1 buying into it so that we can get those kids here.

2 And pretty soon the kids are going to be
3 like, "Mom, everybody is talking about Strive for
4 95. We got to get to school." And so then school
5 becomes the new cell phone and so that's what we
6 talked about.

7 And then shortly, real quick, in terms of the
8 three ways, again, we talked about more effective
9 marketing and implementation of the initiative,
10 community-wide support and alignment toward getting
11 the students to class. If I'm a business, you come
12 in my business and you're supposed to be in school,
13 can't stay here. Okay.

14 MS. McDOWELL: Thank you. We'll have
15 Ms. McCauley finish her section and then we're going
16 to move to that section.

17 MR. JONES: Good evening, everyone. I'm
18 Bryan Jones (ph), Normandy's 7th and 8th grade
19 center speech and theater. We had a meticulous
20 discussion about our order. One minute and 50
21 seconds. The focus is on attendance and then it was
22 a close discussion between attendance and academic
23 achievement, so we felt like attendance was our
24 spring board and it goes back to our district goals
25 and if we're able to achieve it it's because of the

1 academic goals. So it's kind of like a close
2 connection between A and C.

3 We felt like best practice, the relationship,
4 we felt like if we're striving for good
5 relationships with parents and with students then
6 the kids will want to come to school. So some of
7 the things that we said were celebration incentives,
8 relationship building, home visits, staff training
9 students in student-led conferences. It creates a
10 bond between the adults and the student-parent
11 learning assignment. So it all goes back to
12 relationships and making those connections.

13 All right. Gotta lot of time left, do I need
14 to take it up? Okay. Thank you.

15 MS. McDOWELL: So now we're in
16 Sharifah's section.

17 TABLE 4 SPEAKER: Good evening,
18 everyone. We started off with attendance, just like
19 what we've heard from every other group so far.
20 What we said was: If they're not here, they can't
21 learn. Plain and simple as that.

22 One of the things with this is at the high
23 school level we see a lot of our students that walk.
24 We have all the buses that eventually have to come
25 to the high school. Some of those buses are filled

1 to the brim, some have some space on them. Why
2 can't we have those buses pick up those students on
3 the way and help them get there to school?

4 So then that led down really into our three
5 ways that we can do it. Home visits. We sometimes
6 see students that haven't been there the entire year
7 because they've moved out of the footprint. Those
8 home visits would make sure that the students are
9 coming. They have been out for a week or so, what's
10 going on, let's find out about it.

11 Then that led us into contacting outside
12 agencies. We do have a lot of agencies wanting to
13 work with us, especially within the 24:1 idea here.
14 Let's contact them. Let's get them in to do and
15 help us out. Let's not wait for us to go and
16 contact them or them to contact us. Let's find a
17 way to meet in that middle.

18 And the end was the wrap-around services.
19 Those services can really help not only our
20 students, they can help our staffs, they can help
21 our schools really get that attendance piece in
22 there because that is truly what is hurting us, is
23 just that simple attendance piece. Something that
24 we work our jobs, we know that we have to be there,
25 so do students, that's kind of their job.

1 MS. McDOWELL: Thank you.

2 MS. CORRINE: Hello. I'm Corrine. So
3 we also said attendance first because it's the
4 easiest in terms of the short-term goal of
5 accreditation and in order for kids to get
6 instruction they need to be in school and when
7 they're in school the tests that they do take will
8 go towards the score, the overall scores in the
9 school.

10 And so the three ways we talked about
11 increasing attendance was football as an incentive
12 to come to school and making attendance required to
13 play. And the second was parent education and
14 through like a magazine or a newsletter. And then
15 our third thing was about PR, so promoting the
16 possibilities with the promise accounts and 529
17 savings.

18 MS. McDOWELL: Corrine, can you repeat
19 your second one? I missed the second.

20 MS. CORRINE: Parent education.

21 MS. McDOWELL: Parent education, okay.

22 MR. ROBINSON: Good evening. My name is
23 Greg Robinson. My group's number one priority is
24 attendance. Number two was academics. Number three
25 was college and career and four was graduation.

1 We basically discussed attendance and what --
2 I think what we came up with, we got to be hardcore
3 and hold the parents accountable for getting these
4 kids to school. If I don't go to work, I don't get
5 paid. The kids don't go to work, they're not
6 learning anything. So what I think, what we was
7 over here discussing was, we got to hold the parents
8 accountable and for us to hold the parents
9 accountable we have to put a fine, take something
10 away from the parents instead of giving the kid --
11 we can still give the kids incentives for coming to
12 school but we also got to hold the parents
13 accountable and hit the parents where it hurts.
14 Send truancy officers to their front doors.

15 AUDIENCE: We already do that.

16 MR. ROBINSON: Well, I mean, it needs to
17 be done. It needs to be done hard. We need laws --
18 we need legislation where if these parents ain't
19 sending these kids to school we can't keep blaming
20 it on the teachers and the principals. We got to
21 get it where it started. Everything we say, it
22 starts at home with the parents.

23 So if we need to go past the school district
24 and go up to the legislation, we need to start a
25 legislation, we need to make it a law in place where

1 if you're not sending your kid to school we're going
2 to hit you where it hurts and we're going to stop
3 giving you the state assistance and stuff like that.
4 So that's where we stand.

5 MS. McDOWELL: Okay. We're now, I
6 believe, in Shonte's section.

7 MS. JENKINS: Good evening. I'm Tiffany
8 Jenkins and our number one priority was attendance,
9 as well as everyone else's. We discussed -- stating
10 that attendance would be our number one priority.
11 For students, attending every day, also to be on
12 time, would provide students with an opportunity to
13 be -- I'm sorry -- to gain essential classroom
14 instruction. Sorry.

15 Sharing with students and parents the work of
16 attending school on a regular basis, teach them that
17 school is a place that is valued, that attendance
18 starts at home as well as giving them -- actually
19 letting them know this is an opportunity that they
20 will gain as they go out there into the world and
21 start their career.

22 For our number three question we took like a
23 family approach. We stated community advocacy,
24 meaning parent/teacher organization, having that one
25 parent in the community go to knock on the door

1 stating, "If your son or daughter is not at school."

2 You will have that one parent that's in the
3 community asking why or asking the question is there
4 any help that you need, or you know, do you need me
5 to help get them to school or anything like that or
6 making that phone call asking them why they wasn't
7 at school. Again, if you need help getting them to
8 school that day or, again, the reason why they
9 wasn't at school.

10 Also the incentive to get the support from
11 the parents because you always got to gain them --
12 you know, give them that extra incentive, as
13 partnering with the businesses within the community,
14 McDonald's, the movie theater, the gas stations, the
15 liquor stores, Schnucks, whoever, but it's getting
16 like gift certificates or whatever to give to the
17 students to get them there for the attendance.
18 Thank you.

19 MS. McDOWELL: Thank you.

20 MS. MOSLEY: Good evening. My name is
21 Tina Mosley. The four tasks was divided by
22 attendance being number one. Two was improving
23 academics. Three was college and career readiness
24 and four was graduation.

25 Why we chose attendance? Basically, it has

1 been said, if they're not there, they can't learn.
2 Our list we chose was, one, we would like to find
3 out why the 20 percent of our children are absent,
4 why they're not coming to school. Is it a parent
5 who's at work and don't even know their child didn't
6 go to school that day or is it a bed-ridden parent
7 and that child was there taking care of their
8 parents? Based off of that answer we can then
9 formulate neighborhood carpools to school, we can
10 do -- institute church van pickups for children,
11 institute our churches in our community.

12 And, number two, we would have neighborhood
13 parent leaders reach out to the families and to
14 become a connection with them and their needs. And
15 this was identified from a canvassing that was done
16 and some leaders were already pointing out an
17 address and information was received, so we have a
18 starting point.

19 Three is a late bus. Someone mentioned bus
20 and we were saying each school would have a bus that
21 would go back out and do a roundabout in the
22 neighborhood and pick up those stragglers that are
23 still kind of aimlessly walking around.

24 MS. McDOWELL: Thank you. Okay. We
25 have our final two tables I believe.

1 MS. MREEN: Good evening. My name is
2 Fern Mreen and I live in the community. We have a
3 wonderful table over here and everyone had a
4 different opinion but I think what we narrowed in on
5 was what everybody else in this room has said,
6 attendance is critically important. Now, English
7 and math and the social studies, equally important,
8 but we've got to get the kids in school.

9 Another thing that I had been thinking about
10 for sometime and I mentioned to the members here at
11 our table is I'm really old. I'm not even going to
12 tell you how old I am but I remember in high school,
13 years ago, we had something called "vocational
14 training." I took home-ec. I mean, I don't know if
15 they teach home-ec. I have no idea. But I also
16 know that there were many of the young men that were
17 taking something called "shop." They learned how to
18 do things with their hands.

19 Now, I, personally, don't believe that
20 everybody has to go to college. I think that there
21 are some that are very comfortable with working with
22 their hands and when can we develop a time in this
23 country when we can celebrate the blue collar
24 vocations? Do we all have to be graduates of some
25 college? Do we all have to be teachers? Do we all

1 have to be professionals?

2 I think that we need to rethink that
3 vocational thing. There are many schools out there
4 that are making a lot of money on this right now.
5 Why can't we, within our own high school, consider
6 and discuss the possibility of going back to
7 vocational training?

8 MS. McDOWELL: I believe this is our
9 last table. We saved the best for last.

10 MS. KEYONA: Hello, everyone. My name
11 is Keyona. How are you all doing tonight? I was
12 previous a Normandy student but I'm not going to get
13 into that right now. We chose attendance, English
14 language arts, math, science, social studies and
15 resources for parents, graduation rate, college,
16 career and readiness.

17 Attendance is very important. If our kids
18 aren't at school how are they going to learn? With
19 that being said, we, as parents, what are we going
20 to do to make sure our kids get to school? I'm that
21 parent that sees students walking, "Oh, you need a
22 ride, baby? Come get in my car." Because it's not
23 just about my child. It's about every child. These
24 babies are our future. What are we going to do to
25 make sure our kids get to school?

1 Even when they go to school, what are we
2 going to do to make sure that they're doing their
3 work because you can go to school and sit around but
4 if you're not getting your work done, then you're
5 not going to go to the next grade.

6 We, as parents, we have to show the initiative
7 and let our kids know and our babies know we care
8 about your education. I have mine. I want you to
9 get yours. I want to see another black successful
10 doctor or lawyer or astronaut or whatever you want
11 to be, baby, I'm going to support you. So we have
12 to come together and support one another to support
13 our babies.

14 We, as parents, have to get together and talk
15 to one another. "You don't have a car? I'll be at
16 your house at eight o'clock. Be ready." Stuff like
17 that. Communicate. Encourage one another.
18 Support. Like the lady said over there, knock on
19 people's doors. "Why were you late today? Why
20 didn't you come to school today?"

21 And for the parents who do work, because my
22 kids go to Normandy, it bothers me, "I have a job.
23 I have a job." Just like I take off, you can take
24 off. So I'm tired of hearing that as an excuse. I
25 really am. "I can't come up there. I can't." Yes,

1 you can. Take off. Put two weeks in advance, take
2 off, and come sit up at your child's school, so you
3 can know what's going on with your child's
4 education. You can't sit up and nag, oh, you had a
5 bad day at work, where were you at, mom?

6 When I go up to my babies' school all the
7 kids say, "Oh, Cameron and Cody's mom," and they say
8 it because their parents aren't there and I say,
9 "Baby, I can't speak for your parent but I'm up here
10 on behalf of your parent. Let's sit down and get
11 this work done and move to the next subject."

12 So that's my voice being heard. I want all
13 us parents to come together.

14 And another thing I want to say is about the
15 safety. Even though I'm getting off subject, the
16 safety. For the parents, for the fathers, I want to
17 commend you all. I give you all the utmost respect
18 because there's a lot of single dads out here and I
19 want to let you all know I'm proud of you all. And
20 if you all could take the extra step and volunteer
21 at our schools, we need safety people, safe guards,
22 cross guards.

23 These babies are walking to school by
24 themselves. There's killers, dealers, drug dealers,
25 it's all bad people walking the streets. We don't

1 need for our babies to be walking to school when
2 somebody wants to make some fast cash or you need a
3 ride to school and they don't even end up at school.

4 So if you all can take the extra mile to
5 volunteer to make sure these babies get to school
6 safe, you'll -- you'll be happy. You will really be
7 happy. If I can, if I'm not at work I sit up at the
8 school and walk around or if I see some kids that
9 need a ride, I'm giving them that ride or a parent,
10 you need a ride, strollers walking, babies. Parents
11 have a lot of kids. You see all the kids
12 struggling, walking down the street, it's getting
13 cold outside.

14 So I'm going to really need for you all to
15 think about everything I'm saying tonight and when
16 you all go home just think about it. All the
17 parents that walk, all the kids that walk, think
18 about those kids and think about your child and
19 think about your child's future. These babies are
20 our future, so if you all want to see a better
21 future it starts at home.

22 Read to these kids. Whether you read your
23 work schedule, read to these kids. Thank you.

24 MS. McDOWELL: Okay. I think we got to
25 every table. So before we get into the comments

1 time I just want to cover or recap some of the
2 things that you all shared a lot of and it was very
3 creative and if we want different we can't be doing
4 the same thing, so being creative is awesome.

5 So attendance is it. That seems to be your
6 guys' priority but you came up with multiple ways to
7 attack that. Parent accountability, creative
8 marketing, parent education, attendance requirements
9 for sports and extra curricular activities, more
10 wrap-around services, businesses getting involved
11 with the Strive for 95, community and enforcing the
12 initiative for the attendance, don't serve the
13 children when we know they should be in school or
14 during school hours, strive for good relationships
15 with families and parents within the school
16 buildings, create incentives, transportation for
17 walkers, not just high school walkers but it seems
18 like all walkers or supporting those walkers, home
19 visits in order to build relationships but parents
20 trying to go and build those relationships and going
21 door to door, vocational training, volunteering, we
22 need some crossing guards and some safety walkers,
23 partners and businesses getting involved and going
24 and actually asking why children are absent and not
25 making assumptions because there could be multiple

1 reasons why, neighborhood carpools, the neighborhood
2 parent leaders step it up and a late bus.

3 So a lot of different things came out of that
4 and that's awesome. I think that's a lot of stuff
5 that the district can work with and try to get
6 creative in addressing this issue of attendance.

7 So now we're going to move forward. There
8 are a few things that also came up, the canvassing.
9 So, yes, Beyond Housing, Metropolitan Congregation
10 United, a lot of different partners, over 50
11 partners, Normandy staff, community volunteers,
12 parents got together and did canvassing for I think
13 the month of July through September. We attempted
14 to go to over 700-plus homes. We were able to reach
15 416 people and that's families. That's people
16 opening their doors and talking to us.

17 This is our second year doing that. Those
18 are just our second-year numbers. Can't remember
19 the first-year numbers but through that we were able
20 to share Dr. Pearson's message of reading and
21 getting involved, giving them updates on the
22 district and then also inviting them out to the
23 great back to school event that was held at the high
24 school campus.

25 We distributed 1500 backpacks that day, over

1 2100 people served, over 40 resource providers
2 there, so I would like to attribute that to that
3 legwork of those canvasses and getting out there so
4 we can continue that type of energy and us getting
5 up and going to the people, that would be great.

6 You have volunteer packets on your table for
7 opportunities. It's pretty thick, but it's the work
8 that we got to do if we really want to get involved
9 and help the district. I'm going to bring up
10 Denitria Neil really quick because I think her
11 message really contributes to what you guys have
12 said and then we may go over a few minutes for
13 comments but Denitria will be really quick but it's
14 needed.

15 MS. NEIL: Because I ain't got a pencil.
16 I woke myself up because we ain't got an alarm
17 clock. Dug in the dirty clothes basket because
18 ain't nobody washed my uniform. Brushed my hair and
19 teeth in the dark because the lights ain't on. Even
20 got my baby sister ready because my mama wasn't
21 home. Got us both to school on time to eat us a
22 good breakfast then when I got to class the teacher
23 fussed because I ain't got a pencil.

24 I'm Denitria Neil, family engagement,
25 families in transition coordinator for the Normandy

1 Schools Collaborative. First, I would like to thank
2 all of you all that gave your answers, gave your
3 comments, gave your suggestions. That's the exact
4 feedback that we need as a district. That's the
5 dialogue that we need to have to be able to take
6 into consideration and move the district forward.
7 Your voices are very much needed and very much
8 appreciated.

9 Just want to talk to you about a few
10 volunteer needs that we have. As you think about
11 ways, we talked about the data, we talked about
12 suggestions, we talked about the attendance and
13 you're probably trying to figure out: Well, where
14 exactly do I fit into the scope of all of this?
15 Well, there are some volunteer needs that we have
16 that require immediate attention.

17 One of those things that you can look into
18 volunteering for are bus aides. We do need
19 individuals that will ride on the buses with our
20 students so that buses can travel safely without
21 incident.

22 Another place where you can volunteer is in
23 the cafeterias at the breakfast and lunchtime making
24 sure that the young people are sitting down, that
25 they're eating, that there are no incidents there.

1 Of course, in reference to the academic, we
2 also need tutoring. You can volunteer in our OASIS
3 tutoring program to work with our students.

4 And then, lastly, I want to talk to you and
5 point your attention to on your tables there is a
6 pamphlet and that pamphlet is in reference to the
7 Family and Community Advisory Council. And what
8 that is, that's a collaboration of community,
9 families, parents, businesses, just stakeholders
10 coming together and sitting in a council and working
11 on ways to better the district. That is a definite
12 way for you to be able to plug in. There are
13 various subcommittees, membership, legislative,
14 health and wellness, public relations and also the
15 family university.

16 I won't prolong the time. Again, that
17 literature is on the tables and there is additional
18 that are on the table and you can also utilize that
19 and take that in terms of the volunteer packet
20 that's on the table. Thank you for your attention.

21 MS. McDOWELL: Okay. So now we're going
22 to move forward with the comments and questions
23 time. We have Ms. Margie Vandeven, Commissioner of
24 Education and Dr. Pearson, and they're going to try
25 to address your questions this evening. Again,

1 remember for the sake of time -- Dr. Pearson gave me
2 permission, we can go over a few minutes, so we
3 don't have to end directly at 8:30. If you all have
4 to leave, I understand, but if you do have questions
5 we will stay maybe ten minutes over. Is that --

6 DR. PEARSON: At the most.

7 MS. McDOWELL: Okay. At the most.

8 And, remember, if we're unable to get to
9 everyone we have those little white slips on your
10 table, please document your questions and we will
11 type them up and they have agreed to post the
12 responses on their websites. Remember that the
13 websites are at the bottom of your agenda.

14 So I saw the first three hands go up over at
15 this table. Shonte has the mic, Ms. Sharifah and
16 Ms. McCauley still has the mic.

17 MR. MONROE: Good evening. My name is
18 Bill Monroe. I'm a member of the elected board of
19 the City of St. Louis. I'm quite active and I've
20 seen many of you at many sessions. And before you
21 took over for Chris Nicaastro her words were, "We're
22 going to have to think outside the box. We're going
23 to have to be innovative. We're going to have to
24 reach out into the community for solutions." And
25 let me say at the same time, we're talking about

1 black children and black lives matter.

2 I don't see an attempt to be innovative. I
3 don't see an attempt to reach out to people like
4 myself. Dr. Pearson, great guy, he has a proposal
5 on his desk from a project called "Harriet Tubman
6 High School and Career Center." You're probably
7 familiar with it too. This is reaching out and it's
8 not being done.

9 The fact is we cannot ignore that black lives
10 matter. Our children are confronted daily with the
11 hazards of coming out from these schools unable to
12 read with no career training. And I hear you, Dr.
13 Pearson, you said in a couple years we're going to
14 go over some things, we're going to get this Career
15 Pathways going. We got children out here that ain't
16 got that much time, brother. They ain't got that
17 much time. And for us to just continue on a
18 pathway -- and I see you following the same path
19 that Ms. Nicastro put out. I don't see a whole lot
20 of difference. I don't see the reach-out.

21 And I'll say this, and we talk about going to
22 school or getting to a classroom, the -- Reginald
23 Dickson asked a question of you in a meeting
24 sometime ago. He said, "Why do the children come to
25 school?" And you're talking about class attendance.

1 Give them a reason to come. Give them a reason.

2 And this project that you have before -- and
3 I want to tell you this, you asked me a question the
4 other day, you said, "Bill, do you have a site for
5 Harriet Tubman, this project that you're proposing,"
6 where we teach career, job skills, reading and
7 writing half a day, teaching career skills, he said,
8 "Do you have a place?"

9 "Well, yes I do," and I told you that the
10 other day. And I was blessed because Tommie
11 Pierson, the state representative, 66th District,
12 came to me -- and how many of you are familiar with
13 a place called "Storman-Stufflin"? It used to be at
14 1826 Chambers Road.

15 MS. McDOWELL: We're going to have to --

16 MR. MONROE: It's vacant and that's a
17 site right now where we can educate and train our
18 children and I offer you and Beyond Housing, let's
19 sit at the table. Yes, we don't have a whole lot of
20 time, but once again our children don't have a whole
21 lot of time either and they can leave this
22 institution with a two-year training, with a trade,
23 with a Career Pathways, when they walk out with a
24 diploma they can get a job.

25 MS. McDOWELL: Let's give Dr. Pearson an

1 opportunity to respond. I think the question was:
2 What are you doing to be innovative?

3 MR. MONROE: What was that?

4 MS. McDOWELL: That's me over here, the
5 facilitator. So what I think I heard -- well, first
6 let's start off with the time limit. So because of
7 the sake of time and we are already running over --
8 we have a clock back here -- we can only allow you
9 two minutes to formulate your opinion or your
10 comment.

11 MR. MONROE: I'm done. I'm done.

12 MS. McDOWELL: What I think I heard was:
13 What is the district doing to be innovative?
14 Dr. Pearson, if you would like to answer that
15 question.

16 DR. PEARSON: First, as always, I thank
17 Mr. Monroe for his passion. Mr. Monroe pointed out
18 to me earlier today, as I talked to him about our
19 Career Pathways and Project Lead the Way at the high
20 school, that we, as a District, weren't doing a good
21 enough job of informing and letting the community
22 know about that particular model.

23 What I referenced earlier today about several
24 young people having internships with Centene, that's
25 because of that. We do have a model in place. It

1 is innovative and is about children who are able to
2 connect with corporations right now because we do
3 recognize -- in fact, I think you mentioned
4 vocational education earlier. The reality is that
5 we -- all careers don't require that. You know, Dr.
6 Mitchell (ph) shared with me earlier about a welder
7 making over \$70,000 a year. These jobs do exist.
8 Our children are getting introduced to them.

9 At the last board meeting there were actually
10 children there that were talking about working with
11 a 3D printer. These are the kind of things that are
12 happening in the industry and we are introducing
13 those things. But Mr. Monroe is correct in that we
14 are not doing a good enough job of publicizing those
15 opportunities.

16 In terms of your proposal, I do have it and I
17 said it to you then, two-year goal for me first
18 would be making sure we're going to exist. We are
19 operating on reaching out to children. Yours is a
20 good model. We've also identified that the children
21 you're going to connect with are the ones we're
22 already losing.

23 So I don't have an argument with you about
24 the goal. I don't have an argument with you about
25 that. What we have to do is be sure it folds into

1 what we have to get done in the next 24 months
2 before we go forward for the next --

3 MR. MONROE: I think we can do both.

4 DR. PEARSON: I agree.

5 MR. MONROE: If we can send them to the
6 moon, we can design curriculum for these children to
7 save lives in the street. We can do both. Thank
8 you.

9 MS. McDOWELL: All right. We're going
10 to move on to the next question. Again, we got to
11 keep a respect for the time and for the other folks
12 that are in this room and want to be heard as well.
13 The clock is over here on the corner.

14 MR. HENDERSON: Good evening. Dryver
15 Henderson. Lived in the area, long-time activist,
16 member, former officer of the Parent Community
17 Advisory Council. I will join your community again.

18 Two minutes time limit one more time. We
19 have been here two and a half hours, now we're
20 getting to the reason many of us came. You've shut
21 us up, you found a way to entertain us and talk
22 about an agenda different than the agenda you've
23 talked about. You cut the meeting short, that's
24 fine, except that becomes the star example of the
25 failure you and DESE has allowed.

1 You passed on your update so -- because it
2 will come later, fine, then it won't appear in the
3 minutes. But for those who might want to review the
4 minutes at a later time they won't get your updates.

5 Further, what an outrage. You voted quickly,
6 in less than 25 seconds, on six consent items and
7 you talked about, well, maybe you had some telephone
8 conversations. If you had a telephone conversation
9 with the majority of the board members then it was
10 an official meeting and there should have been a
11 public notice.

12 We come to these meetings. You have public
13 meetings for the purpose of hearing the public talk
14 about hearing you talk about these things and seeing
15 you vote on them.

16 The FantasTechs contract, surely that's going
17 to be more than 25,000, so that should have gone out
18 for a bid. Did it? This is the first I'm hearing
19 of it and how you decided to -- that you need it and
20 what you're going to do about it but was
21 certainly --

22 MS. McDOWELL: We're going to have wrap
23 you up, Mr. Dryver. Thank you very much.

24 MR. HENDERSON: There you go, one more
25 time. Isn't this a bunch of bullshit that we waste

1 our --

2 MS. McDOWELL: Thank you very much.

3 This is a public hearing to talk about moving
4 forward progress for accreditation. I encourage
5 anybody else that has comments or questions please
6 share and remember why you're here, just remember
7 why you're here.

8 MS. LOVE: Yes, my name is Sheila Love
9 and I volunteer at Barack Obama at \$25 a week. So I
10 want you all that talk the talk, let's see you walk
11 the walk. I want to see some of you all with these
12 badges on to go up to the schools. Check them out.
13 You all are talking about behavior, I know -- I
14 mean, you're always talking about attendance, you
15 got to get their behavior together first.

16 My grandson, just the other day, little boy
17 put his body between a chair. How can the teachers
18 teach with so much disruption? So I'm telling you
19 now, I'm challenging you all to go to the schools
20 around lunchtime. See how these teachers go home
21 with headaches, heartaches and on crutches.

22 A little boy actually hit his teacher in the
23 leg and his teacher was walking around on crutches.
24 She's no longer there, said she couldn't handle it.
25 Sure did. But, anyway, I want to see you all walk

1 the walk now. Come up to these schools and not only
2 that, I see you all here, where them teachers? This
3 should be a mandatory --

4 MS. McDOWELL: Normandy staff raise your
5 hand.

6 MS. LOVE: I'm not talking about you.
7 I'm talking about all the teachers. There's more
8 than you all at Normandy, come on now. We got
9 Barack Obama. We got Lucas Crossing. It should be
10 mandatory. All the teachers, not only you all.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Where are the parents
12 too?

13 MS. LOVE: And the parents.

14 MS. KEYONA: Right here.

15 MS. LOVE: And I stay up at Barack Obama
16 school. I see so much. I want to challenge you
17 all. I want to see you up there Monday. I will be
18 up there. Challenge.

19 MS. McDOWELL: Thank you. Are there any
20 other questions or comments about the accreditation
21 progress moving forward?

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good evening. I would
23 like to thank the Department of Elementary and
24 Secondary Education for finding a formula by which
25 they can make the powerlessness of black existence

1 in Missouri more tolerable. Your tedious criteria
2 of subgroups, super subgroups, expectations and
3 exceeded expectations, DESE has derived at a
4 methodology by which it appears that black children
5 can learn too. Yet, blacks are at the lowest -- are
6 the lowest scoring race on the MAP test.

7 For me, this is quite troubling. You see,
8 I'm a graduate of Normandy Schools, top 5 percent of
9 my class. I graduated summa cum laude from UMSL
10 right across here. For 30 years I've instructed --
11 and I grew up as poor, if not poorer, than the black
12 children in this district right now.

13 For 30 years I've instructed black children
14 and exceeded the grade level expectations set forth
15 by the Missouri Department of Elementary and
16 Secondary Education. So, yes, I'm still troubled.
17 Even more so I feel that DESE uses low scores to
18 justify having one black out of 78 top
19 administrators. One black. See, that's low scores
20 that they can justify, well, blacks aren't smart
21 enough to do this.

22 The youth at Mizzou should have demanded
23 something be done about that as a condition to
24 return to participation but they couldn't fix
25 everything. Until we deal with the racism in

1 Missouri that perpetuates all of these intolerable
2 conditions, continue strategy settings that ensure
3 that blacks will remain permanently at the floor of
4 economic advantage in this state, until we do
5 something about that we have done not a thing.
6 Thank you.

7 MS. McDOWELL: Thank you. Any other
8 comments or questions about progress or
9 accreditation and helping our children move forward?

10 MS. KEYONA: It's me again. I want to
11 talk about the safety that's going on in schools.
12 I'm against bullying 100 percent. Like the lady
13 said, walk the walk. I want you all to go in the
14 schools -- every school has a secret but if you're
15 not in there and involved you're not going to catch
16 that secret. All of these schools are doing some
17 stuff that have no business going on. But if you're
18 not in there watching, like my pastor said, "Your
19 eyes have to be open." If your eyes are not open
20 you're not going to see what's going on.

21 My baby came home one day and he got stabbed
22 in the face with a pencil. Did I get a phone call?
23 Did I get an incident report? No. But, luckily,
24 I'm that involved parent and me and the principal,
25 we handled the situation and she proceeded with

1 protocol but, my point is, who is to say that's not
2 going to happen to the next child or what are we
3 going to do to prevent that from happening to the
4 next child? Once again it's on both ends.

5 Somebody made a comment about the teachers
6 and stuff. It's 50/50. We gotta do our part as
7 parents and as community leaders and they have to do
8 their part as teachers. It's not going to happen
9 overnight. We have to all come together.

10 We fight each other. Like where is the
11 support? That's what the system wants us to do, is
12 fight against each other. We have to stick together
13 and come together for these kids because, like I
14 said from the get-go, these kids are the future, so
15 how are we going to help them to be the future?

16 We need to put aside our differences and step
17 together and come up with plans and solutions to
18 make these kids know that your education do matter,
19 I do care about your education, I do care about your
20 safety, I do care about your well-being. I care. I
21 don't just care about my kids, I care about your
22 grandson, your grandson, your grandson and your kid,
23 whoever. I care about all these babies.

24 MS. LOVE: Well, you know what I was
25 told? Focus on MAP.

1 MS. KEYONA: See, that's where you're
2 wrong at. Focus on your child, you're not going to
3 exceed because your child is around all these other
4 kids, so if you're just going to be focusing on your
5 child how are you expecting for your child to move
6 forward because he's still in the -- he's still
7 surrounded around the negativity and he's still in
8 that environment? So for you to have that mind
9 frame, you need to kill that.

10 MS. LOVE: No, the teacher told me to
11 focus on MAP.

12 MS. McDOWELL: Okay. Let's allow Dr.
13 Pearson to respond to the safety and also maybe
14 officials visiting the school.

15 DR. PEARSON: I don't have any -- I
16 don't have a clever thing to say about the fact that
17 we have children who need support in how to address
18 issues. We have assistance we still need to put in
19 place. I can point to numbers dropping but we're
20 not where we need to be. Bullying is an issue for
21 some children and, yes, we know that.

22 As a former principal I know how we can watch
23 children and all you need to do is turn your back
24 once and have a kid hit someone. We have to do a
25 better job of classroom management. We have to do a

1 better job of supporting our teachers so they can
2 spot it.

3 And you are correct it's about us in central
4 office, each one of is committed to being in
5 buildings throughout the week. We can do more. So
6 I won't even offer any excuses about that. I can
7 only say we're making progress but every time
8 anyone's child comes home hurt, that has been a bad
9 a day for that child and that school hasn't been
10 successful. That's reality.

11 On the other hand, we also recognize that
12 there are children who come to us, as I said in my
13 presentation, who come with challenges that life has
14 laid on them and so we have to also provide the
15 support they need, the psychologists, the
16 psychological support where we do what we need to do
17 to allow instruction.

18 So I acknowledge it. I claim it as a leader.
19 I have to claim it. I know we're better than where
20 we were but we're not where we need to be. Bullying
21 is an issue. It's surely an issue in most schools,
22 especially the middle school level. So that's just
23 a reality we're working with.

24 MS. McDOWELL: Thank you. Are there any
25 more questions or comments about progress and moving

1 forward and helping our children learn?

2 DR. PEARSON: Oh, let me add one other
3 thing. The conversation about volunteering, we want
4 you to come in and volunteer but we also know we
5 have to work with you because when you're in the
6 building working with volunteering we have to be
7 sure and be very careful about how you treat other
8 people's children. And so we have to do a good job
9 making sure we equip you for that, knowing what
10 lines you can cross and not cross.

11 Recently there was an incident where parents
12 were upset about something that happened at a bus
13 stop and they added to it. We have to manage those
14 kinds of things. We have to be both caring and
15 careful and be sure we're not breaking laws but we
16 are supporting.

17 But our job, as a school, as a school
18 district, is to be sure that we provide you with the
19 necessary training, not so much training but
20 guidelines so that you don't end up in trouble about
21 something you may have said or done to someone
22 else's child. So we need you present but we need to
23 be sure we give you the support you need to be
24 effective for our children. Does that make sense?

25 AUDIENCE: Yes.

1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. My question is
2 not for you, Dr. Pearson. For Jefferson Elementary,
3 what are you doing with that 90 percent that other
4 campuses can model because you're doing it
5 consistently? So I just wanted to ask what can you
6 share with the rest of us?

7 MS. McDOWELL: Is there a representative
8 from Jefferson that you'd like to answer that
9 question? So you're reaching your 90-90 and she
10 wanted to know if you can share how you're doing
11 that and some things that you're doing.

12 DR. PEARSON: I will note that Ms. Tina
13 Clark-Scott is the last voice for the evening
14 because we're coming up on that ten minutes.

15 MS. CLARK-SCOTT: Good evening. We have
16 an attendance team and we work very closely together
17 with the parent liaison, the counselor, the
18 secretary and myself and we just work together and
19 we tag team. We do parent visits. We do phone
20 calls. But, most importantly, we have relationships
21 with all of our families and we are able to do that
22 because we have a smaller school and I've been
23 there. This is my fourth year, so we've been able
24 to build that and we've been able to sustain that
25 and the parent liaison has been there for a while as

1 well and so we're just able to do that. We go out,
2 we knock on doors, and we just -- we meet once a
3 week and we just hit it hard.

4 MS. McDOWELL: Thank you. We weren't
5 able to get to everyone. Again, I received some
6 sheets that we can give to the district to answer
7 questions. If you have any more, please leave them.
8 Ms. Margie Vandeven is going to close us out.

9 I'll just remind you that we have over 3300
10 children in our school district and if we don't get
11 together and figure out effective progress and steps
12 that we need to take and put aside our personal
13 feelings, they're going to lose. So it's not about
14 the adults, somebody said that earlier, it's about
15 our children, okay?

16 COMMISSIONER VANDEVEN: I just wanted to
17 take the opportunity to thank all of you. I know
18 that the meeting has already gone long, so I won't
19 spend an enormous amount of time. I would like to
20 quickly share with you that I was on the other side
21 of the state today in a district and similar in
22 demographics who actually has over a 92 percent on
23 their Annual Performance Report and I sat and talked
24 with kids. Kids who have many issues. Two kids
25 shared with me they lost parents in the last year

1 and it was their school district that was their
2 family and their support.

3 And I asked them, "If you walked into a
4 school district and you wanted to change the culture
5 or the climate where would you start?"

6 And they said, "It is all about working
7 together, supporting each other, not bullying one
8 another, being a part of the community." And the
9 teachers said, "You need to be very clear that we
10 love each other and these schools."

11 So we know we have a long way to go. We get
12 it. But when Dr. Neale talks about we see progress,
13 this is the progress that we're talking about,
14 seeing you all come together and all of these tables
15 coming together with the same mission: You want to
16 see your kids in school. You want to see your kids
17 learning. You want to think about strategies on how
18 to make sure they're getting here and then when they
19 are here that something productive is happening and
20 our students are learning.

21 I want to thank you. Keep it up. Keep
22 going. Let us know how we can support you. We are
23 with you in this. So thank you very much. Have a
24 good evening. Safe travels.

25 DR. PEARSON: As you're about to go

1 please turn to the people at your table and look
2 them in the eye and say, "You are amazing." Thank
3 you so much for your work tonight.

4 (Whereupon, the record ended at 8:43 p.m.)

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